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ABSTRACT

The Community Profiles Project uses data from the 1990 U.S. Census to describe some of the population characteristics of Asian Pacific Americans in selected Massachusetts cities and towns. The profiles include basic statistics relating to income, employment, education, and housing. This information can assist policy makers and practitioners in developing programs and policies affecting Asian Pacific Americans that are appropriate, sensitive, and effective. This profile focuses on Boston. The 1980s saw the number of Asian Pacific Americans in Boston double, until the 30,457 Asian Pacific Americans recorded as living in Boston accounted for about 5% of the city's residents. Household incomes of Asian Pacific Americans in Boston reflected wide disparities, but the per capita income of Asian Pacific Americans in Boston was less than half that of Whites. There were dramatic differences in the English language proficiency of older and younger Asian Pacific Americans in Boston. Nearly 50% of all Asian Pacific Americans in Boston were enrolled in school. This was the highest percentage of school enrollment of any racial and ethnic group. The proportion enrolled in college was particularly high, at 26.4%. The educational attainment of Asian Pacific Americans over age 25 differed from that of the total population in that a considerably higher percentage of Asian Pacific Americans had less than a ninth-grade education. However, a slightly higher percentage of Asian Pacific Americans had secured graduate or professional degrees compared with the total population. (Contains nine figures and eight tables.) (SLD)

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Asian Pacific Americans in Boston.
Community Profiles in Massachusetts

Institute for Asian American Studies · UMass Boston

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COMMUNITY PROFILES IN MASSACHUSETTS

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS *in Boston*

INSTITUTE FOR ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES • UMASS BOSTON • BOSTON, MA 02125

The Community Profiles Project utilizes data drawn from the 1990 U.S. Census to describe some of the population characteristics of Asian Pacific Americans in selected Massachusetts cities and towns. The profiles include basic statistics relating to income, employment, education, and housing.This information can assist policymakers and practitioners in developing programs and constructing policies affecting Asian Pacific Americans that are appropriate, sensitive, and effective.

The Institute for Asian American Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston brings together resources and expertise from both the campus and community to conduct research on Asian Pacific American issues, to expand Asian American studies in the curriculum, and to support development initiatives in Asian Pacific American communities in Massachusetts.

Project Staff: Project director: Paul Watanabe. Principal researchers: Carlton Sagara and Joanne Chow. Design and Production: Shauna Lo and Marilyn Wu

Support provided by: The Boston Foundation

CPIB-12.94

1. Population Characteristics

Table 1. Population by Race*

White	361,513
Black	146,695
Other	33,753
Asian Pacific American	30,457
Native American	1,865
TOTAL	574,283

* Latinos may be of any race

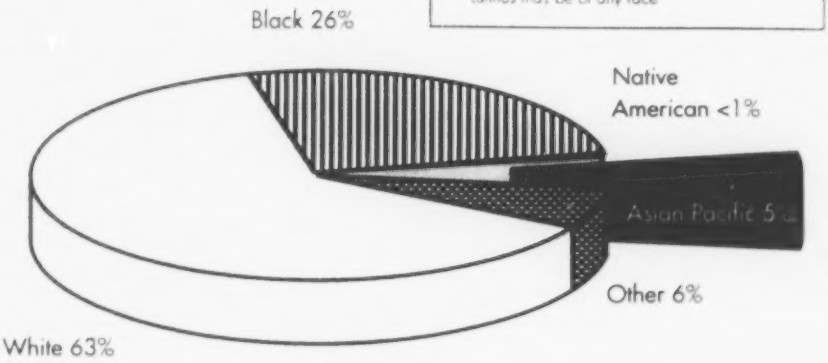

Figure 1

• The decade of the 1980s saw the number of Asian Pacific Americans living in Boston double.

• The 30,457 Asian Pacific Americans recorded in the 1990 census as living in Boston (Table 1) accounted for approximately 5% of the city's residents (Figure 1).

• Chinese accounted for over one-half of the Asian Pacific American population (Table 2). Recently the most rapid growth has been recorded by Southeast Asians. The number of Vietnamese in Boston, for example, grew by nearly 500% during the 1980s.

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• The Asian Pacific American population was nearly equally divided between females and males overall and in virtually every age group. It was also relatively young with less than 20% older than 45 years of age (Figure 2).

• Dramatic differences were found in the English language proficiency of older and younger Asian Pacific Americans (Figure 3). Among those 65 years old and over, for example, approximately 70% were not proficient in English. For individuals 5 to 17 years old, about 22% were not proficient.

Table 2. Ancestry of Asian Pacific Americans

Chinese	16,263	53.4%
Vietnamese	4,812	15.8%
Asian Indian	1,948	6.4%
Japanese	1,675	5.5%
Korean	1,368	4.5%
Filipino	1,212	4.0%
Other Asian	1,100	3.6%
Cambodian	1,052	3.5%
Laotian	396	1.3%
Thai	358	1.2%
Guamanian	210	0.7%
Hawaiian	44	0.1%
Samoan	12	0.0%
Other Pacific Islander	7	0.0%
TOTAL	30,457	100.00%

Figure 2. Asian Pacific Americans by Sex and Age

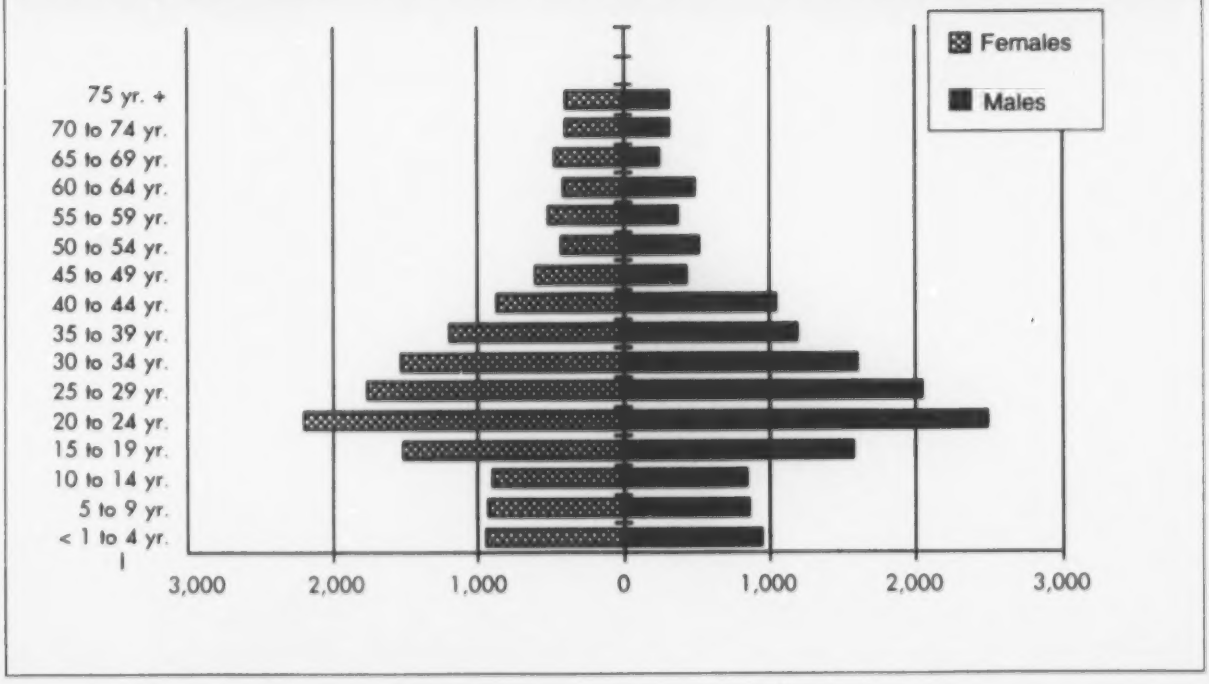

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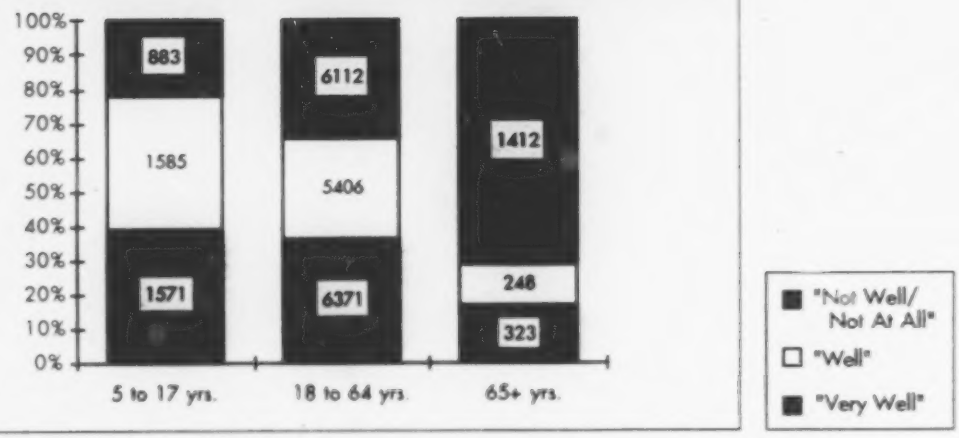
Figure 3. English Proficiency Among Asian Pacific Americans



II. Income

Table 3. Household Income by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am	Other	Latino*	TOTAL
Less than $5,000	1,621	9,958	5,250	82	1,343	2,290	18,254
	17.1%	6.3%	10.5%	11.8%	13.8%	12.6%	8.0%
$5,000 to $9,999	1,194	17,928	7,499	132	1,698	3,119	28,451
	12.6%	11.3%	15.1%	19.0%	17.4%	17.1%	12.5%
$10,000 to $14,999	723	11,427	3,742	50	887	1,772	16,829
	7.6%	7.2%	7.5%	7.2%	9.1%	9.7%	7.4%
$15,000 to $24,999	1,589	23,103	9,304	166	1,943	3,686	36,105
	16.8%	14.6%	18.7%	23.9%	19.9%	20.2%	15.8%
$25,000 to $34,999	1,380	22,990	7,421	87	1,306	2,550	33,184
	14.6%	14.5%	14.9%	12.5%	13.4%	14.0%	14.6%
$35,000 to $49,999	1,232	26,832	7,476	70	1,357	2,436	36,967
	13.0%	17.0%	15.0%	10.1%	13.9%	13.4%	16.2%
$50,000 to $74,999	1,199	26,295	6,485	79	862	1,665	34,920
	12.7%	16.6%	13.0%	11.4%	8.8%	9.1%	15.3%
$75,000 to $99,999	328	10,134	1,660	29	207	444	12,358
	3.5%	6.4%	3.3%	4.2%	2.1%	2.4%	5.4%
$100,000 or more	195	9,576	955	0	164	264	10,890
	2.1%	6.1%	1.9%	0.0%	1.7%	1.4%	4.8%
TOTAL	9,461	158,243	49,792	695	9,767	18,226	227,958
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

* Latinos may be of any race

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• Household incomes of Asian Pacific Americans reflected some wide disparities (Table 3). For example, the percentage of Asian Pacific Americans in the lowest income category (those making less than $5,000) was the largest of any racial and ethnic group. On the other hand, the percentage of Asian Pacific Americans in the highest category (those making over $100,000), was the largest by a small margin of any non-white group, although trailing the percentage for whites by a considerable margin.

• The distribution of Asian Pacific American household incomes compared with the total population was considerably larger in the lower income categories (less than $25,000) and smaller in the higher categories (above $35,000) (Figure 4).

• The per capita income of Asian Pacific Americans was less than one-half that of whites (Figure 5).

• A larger portion of Asian Pacific Americans in poverty was less than 18 years old compared with whites (Table 4). Older Asian Pacific Americans, in contrast, constituted a smaller percentage of those in poverty compared with whites (Table 4).

Figure 4. Household Income for Asian Pacific Am. and Total Population

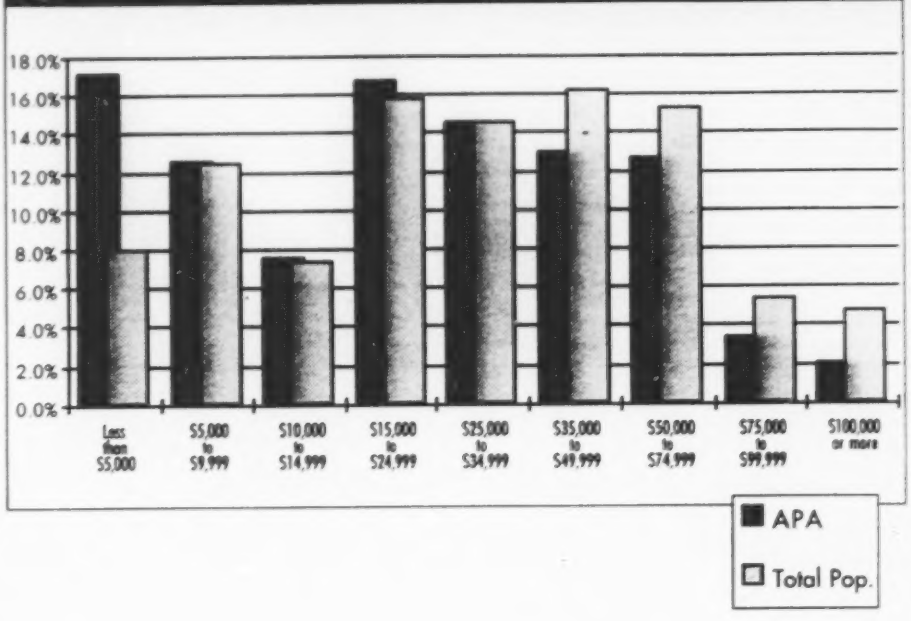

Figure 5. Per Capita Income by Race and Ethnicity

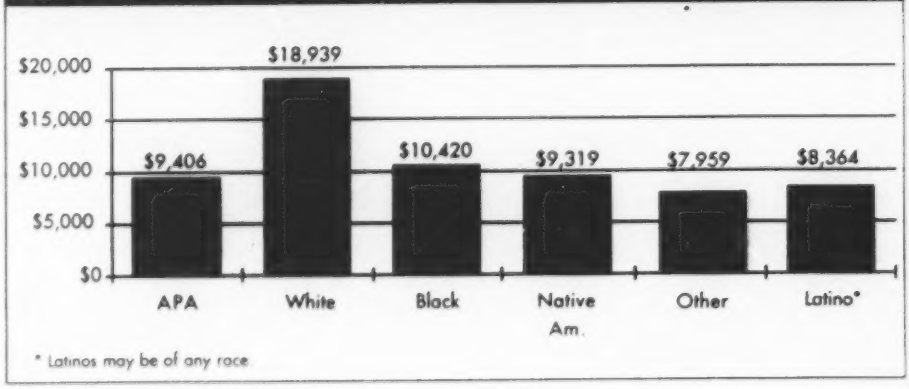

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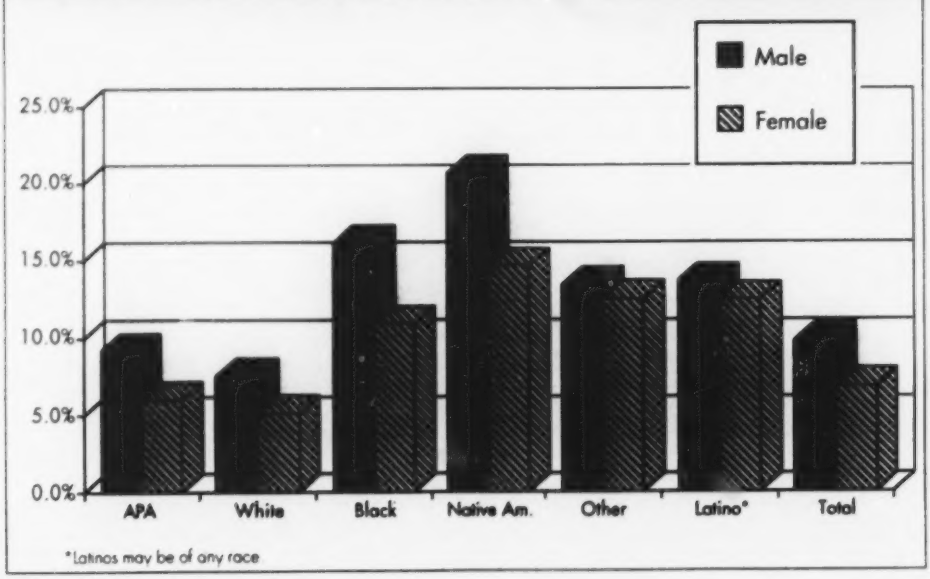
Table 4. Poverty Status by Age by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am.	Other	Latino*	TOTAL
Under 5 years	631	2,666	4,749	45	1,648	2,714	9,739
	7.5%	5.6%	13.7%	7.1%	14.7%	13.8%	9.5%
5 years	150	456	762	22	257	426	1,647
	1.8%	1.0%	2.2%	3.5%	2.3%	2.2%	1.6%
6 to 11 years	695	2,928	4,937	115	1,800	2,931	10,475
	8.2%	6.2%	14.3%	18.2%	16.0%	14.9%	10.3%
12 to 17 years	666	2,163	4,216	91	1,375	2,304	8,511
	7.9%	4.6%	12.2%	14.4%	12.2%	11.7%	8.3%
18 to 64 years	5,561	32,588	18,015	328	5,842	10,852	62,334
	66.0%	69.0%	52.1%	51.9%	52.0%	55.2%	61.1%
65 to 74 years	464	3,036	1,295	19	214	333	5,028
	5.5%	6.4%	3.7%	3.0%	1.9%	1.7%	4.9%
75 years and over	259	3,372	625	12	90	104	4,358
	3.1%	7.1%	1.8%	1.9%	0.8%	0.5%	4.3%
TOTAL	8,426	47,209	34,599	632	11,226	19,664	102,092
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Latinos may be of any race

III. Employment

Figure 6. Unemployment Rate By Sex, Race and Ethnicity



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- Asian Pacific Americans had the lowest labor force participation rate of any racial and ethnic group (Table 5).
- Male and female unemployment rates were greater than those for whites and closely reflected those for the total population (Figure 6).

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Table 5. Labor Force Attachment for Persons 16 Years and Older by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat Am	Other	Latino*	TOTAL
Males	12,543	152,026	48,383	577	11,186	20,717	224,715
In Armed Forces	25	970	92	5	19	65	1,111
Civilian: Employed	7,214	102,436	28,965	357	6,990	13,208	145,962
Civilian: Unemployed	732	8,345	5,561	93	1,078	2,087	15,809
Not in labor force	4,572	40,275	13,765	122	3,099	5,357	61,833
Male Unempl. Rate#	9.2%	7.5%	16.1%	20.7%	13.4%	13.6%	9.8%
Participation Rate@	63.5%	73.3%	71.5%	78.7%	72.2%	74.1%	72.3%
Females	12,088	168,006	58,604	791	12,071	22,085	251,560
In Armed Forces	0	34	20	0	0	0	54
Civilian: Employed	6,218	98,754	31,896	397	5,477	10,450	142,742
Civilian: Unemployed	398	5,317	3,919	68	782	1,488	10,484
Not in labor force	5,472	63,901	22,769	326	5,812	10,147	98,280
Female Unempl. Rate#	6.0%	5.1%	10.9%	14.6%	12.5%	12.5%	6.8%
Participation Rate@	54.7%	62.0%	61.1%	58.8%	51.9%	54.1%	60.9%

Unempl. Rate = (Civilian Unempl.)/(Civilian Empl. + Civilian Unempl.)

@ Participation Rate=(Civilian Employed+Civilian Unempl.)/(Civilian Empl.+Civilian Unempl.+Not in Labor Force)

IV. Education

Table 6. School Enrollment of Persons 3 Years and Older by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat Am	Other	Latino*	TOTAL
In Preprimary School	291	3,099	2,347	19	446	724	6,202
	1.0%	0.9%	1.7%	1.1%	1.4%	1.3%	1.1%
Elem. or High School	5,374	29,540	31,741	445	8,375	13,136	75,475
	18.3%	8.4%	22.9%	25.0%	26.5%	23.4%	13.7%
Enrolled in College	7,755	59,579	13,959	269	3,269	6,644	84,831
	26.4%	17.0%	10.1%	15.1%	10.3%	11.9%	15.3%
Not Enrolled in School	15,938	259,122	90,581	1,046	19,547	35,531	386,234
	54.3%	73.8%	65.3%	58.8%	61.8%	63.4%	69.9%
TOTAL	29,358	351,340	138,628	1,779	31,637	56,035	552,742
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

* Latinos may be of any race

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Figure 7. Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older for Asian Pacific Americans and Total Population

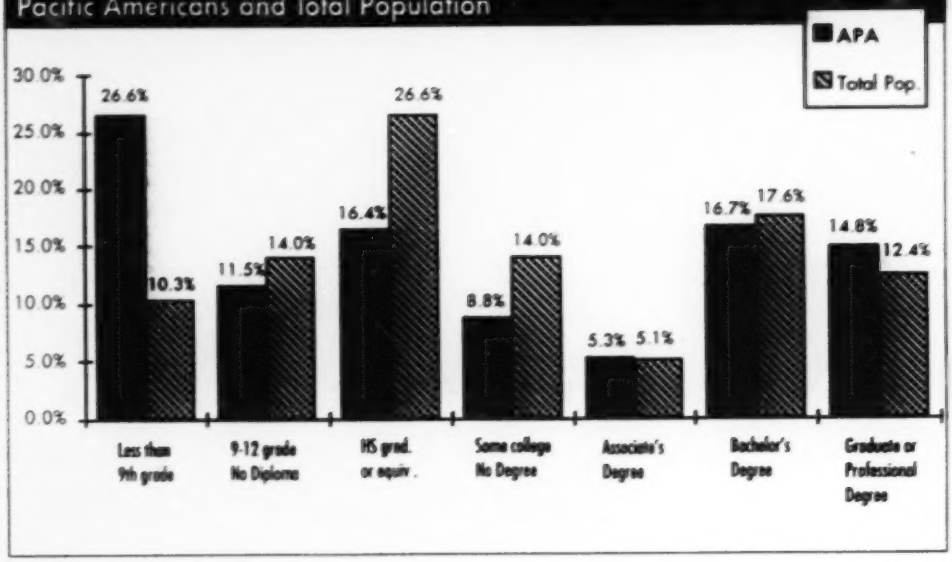

Table 7. Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am	Other	Latino*	TOTAL
Less than 9th grade	4,565	18,503	9,379	116	5,261	8,490	37,824
	26.6%	7.4%	11.3%	10.7%	32.4%	28.3%	10.3%
9th-12th gr., no diploma	1,976	27,526	18,213	195	3,141	5,675	51,051
	11.5%	11.1%	22.0%	18.0%	19.4%	18.9%	14.0%
HS grad (or equivalency)	2,818	65,669	24,782	271	3,693	6,643	97,233
	16.4%	26.4%	29.9%	25.1%	22.8%	22.1%	26.6%
Some college, no degree	1,509	33,553	14,180	234	1,787	3,445	51,263
	8.8%	13.5%	17.1%	21.6%	11.0%	11.5%	14.0%
Associate degree	908	12,022	4,695	71	930	1,590	18,626
	5.3%	4.8%	5.7%	6.6%	5.7%	5.3%	5.1%
Bachelor's degree	2,863	53,013	7,525	115	874	2,384	64,390
	16.7%	21.3%	9.1%	10.6%	5.4%	7.9%	17.6%
Graduate or prof. degree	2,545	38,087	4,071	79	539	1,774	45,321
	14.8%	15.3%	4.9%	7.3%	3.3%	5.9%	12.4%
TOTAL	17,184	248,373	82,845	1,081	16,225	30,001	365,708
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

* Latinos may be of any race

- Nearly 50% of all Asian Pacific Americans were enrolled in school (Table 6). This was the highest percentage of school enrollment of any racial and ethnic group.
- The proportion of the group enrolled in college was particularly high, 26.4% for Asian Pacific Americans compared with 17% for whites and 15.3% for the total population (Table 6).
- The educational attainment of Asian Pacific Americans over 25 years old departed from those of the total population at several levels (Table 7 and Figure 7). For example, a considerably higher percentage of Asian Pacific Americans had less than a 9th grade education. A slightly higher proportion of Asian Pacific Americans had secured graduate or professional degrees compared with the total population and a significantly higher proportion compared with other non-whites.

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V. Housing

- The owner-occupancy rate for Asian Pacific Americans like those of other non-whites trailed rates for whites and the total population by a considerable margin (Figure 8).
- The proportion of rents paid by Asian Pacific Americans at different levels mirrored rather closely those of whites (Figure 9).

Figure 8. Rental and Owner Occupancy By Race and Ethnicity

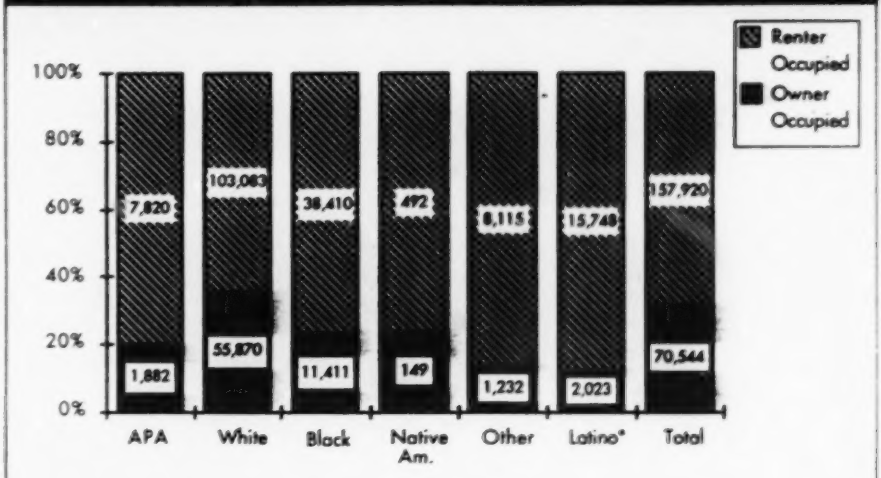

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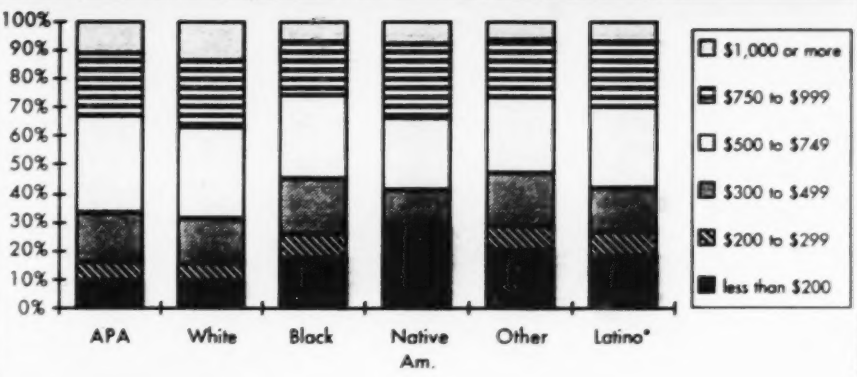
Figure 9. Gross Rent By Race and Ethnicity



* Latinos may be of any race.

LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA

The 1990 U.S. Census data allow for the examination of the situation of Asian Pacific Americans and provide the most comprehensive available information on this group. The data, however, do have some limitations. Linguistic, cultural, and other barriers contributed to an undercounting of Asian Pacific Americans in the 1990 Census. Furthermore, by aggregating Asian Pacific Americans together, differences between nationalities were often muted. Errors in coding also limited the reliability of some data on Asian Pacific Americans.

Table 8. Gross Rent by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am.	Other	Latino*
Less than $200	710	9,673	6,548	132	1,580	2,839
$200 to $299	515	6,011	3,301	8	717	1,295
$300 to $499	1,355	16,156	7,213	61	1,458	2,372
$500 to $749	2,572	31,930	10,953	124	2,143	4,463
$750 to $999	1,677	23,416	7,186	128	1,575	3,423
$1,000 or more	892	14,407	2,766	39	566	1,219
No cash rent	99	1,448	335	0	51	112

* Latinos may be of any race.

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